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1899

STATEMENT OF FACTS,

IN RELATION

TO THE CALL AND INSTALLATION

OF

The Rev. Mark Tucker,

OVER THE SOCIETY IN NORTHAMPTON.

TOGETHER

WITH HIS CORRESPONDENCE ON THE SUBJECT

OF EXCHANGES.

PUBLISHED BY A COMMITTEE APPOINTED FOR THAT PURPOSE.

Northampton:
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1824.

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ASTOR, LENOX AND
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS.
1899.

☞ *It is believed, by some individuals of Northampton, that their motives have been misunderstood, and that their conduct has been in some instances misrepresented. To present every thing in a fair light, and to let all those interested have an opportunity to judge of what has been done, they publish the following statement.* *Northampton, October,* 1824.

STATEMENT OF FACTS.

In the early part of January, 1824, Mr. Tucker came to this town, to preach as a candidate. Within a fortnight after he came, Mr. Howe called on him and had a long conversation with him. Mr. Howe stated to him, that he differed from him in religious opinions and was desirous to avoid any division in the Society; but, that he, and some others, had made up their minds, that they never would concur in the settlement of any person as a Colleague, unless upon the principles of Christian liberty and perfect toleration. That in former years, it was sufficient, that a man was settled and known as a Christian minister (if his life and conversation were such as became his station) to entitle him to all the courtesies and civilities of Christian intercourse. That for a few years past, a different course had been pursued. The Clergy had assumed the right to sit in judgment on their fellow mortals, to institute a scrutiny into the private sentiments entertained by them, and to decide upon their correctness. This circumstance had led the members of this association to refuse to make any exchanges with neighboring Unitarians. Mr. Howe informed him that Unitarian ministers, of regular standing and unexceptionable morals had been suffered to attend meeting here through the day, without receiving any invitation to preach.

Mr. Tucker said, he had heard something of the difficulties which had existed, and expressed his decided disapprobation of the course, (which he had been informed) his predecessor, Mr. S. P. Williams, had pursued here. Mr. Tucker said, he thought he should have no difficulty in relation to the subject. That he should not undertake to decide who were, or who were not Christians. That he had long lived among, and had intercourse with, Christians of different denominations, but that he had avoided all difficulty by putting them all on the same footing.

Mr. Howe then asked him, if he should be willing to exchange with, or invite to preach, the Minister of the Brattle Street Church. He said, he was not prepared to give a direct answer to the question. That its decision must involve a variety of considerations, which must all be attended to, before a direct answer could be given. "If I should be settled here, (continued he) Mr. Williams would be the elder pastor, and I should consider him as having a right to control the desk, and he might be unwilling."

Mr. Howe told him he did not ask what he *would do*, in any particular case, but what *he should be willing* to do. Mr. Tucker replied, "I do not know that I can give you a better view of my sentiments on this subject, than to tell you, that I think as Dr. Nott does. He was invited to settle in Park Street Church, and declined the invitation, *because that Church would not suffer him to* EXCHANGE *with the other ministers in Boston.*"

To Mr. Hinckley he made the same statement, in the same way, in more than one instance; and when he was told that an attempt would probably be made by the association, or other individuals in the vicinity, and perhaps by a few persons in his own society, to influence his conduct in this respect, he asked, "What have the association to do with this subject? Are not your churches independent?" He was told they were, entirely so, yet this sort of influence had

been exercised, with effect heretofore, and would doubtless be attempted again. He said he should not suffer himself to be influenced by any such considerations.

To Mr. Joseph Lyman, he stated "*that he should pursue such a course here in relation to invitations and exchanges, as would satisfy the expectations of all.*" When informed of the difficulty which might be made by some of the more zealous clergy of the vicinity, he replied that "they could be managed;" though he said he apprehended more trouble from them than from the Liberal party. Mr. Lyman told him of the conduct which had been pursued towards Mr. Willard, by this association, and particularly, that on one occasion, Mr. Williams had agreed to exchange with Mr. Willard, and the day for the purpose was fixed, when Mr. Williams was prevented from fulfilling his engagement by the interference of his clerical brethren. He was told also of the resolution entered into by them, not only refusing to exchange with Mr. Willard, but refusing to exchange with those, who should exchange with him.

With Dr. Flint he had repeated conversations on this subject, in which he was uniformly told, that the only terms upon which he could expect the votes of the Liberal party for his settlement, were those of perfect toleration. That EXCHANGES with Unitarian ministers would be insisted on, and that the doors of the pulpit must be opened. The sentiments expressed to Dr. Flint were uniformly the same as those expressed to the other gentlemen alluded to. A short time before the town meeting, a very particular conversation took place between him and Dr. Flint, in which Dr. Flint told Mr. Tucker, that the subject of *exchanges* was much talked of abroad, in reference to his settlement, and people were anxious to know what he intended to do. That enquiries were often made, and he wished to know what he might say from *him* upon that subject. "*I know,*" said Mr. Tucker,

"*what you and your friends want, and if I should be settled here, you may rest assured they shall not be disappointed.*" He then added, "If there was a single member of my society, who was anxious to hear any particular minister, in regular standing and of good character, I would gratify him; and if I could not do it in any other way, I would take my horse and chaise and fetch him."

On Friday evening, previous to the town meeting, an interview was had between several of the Liberal party, and some of the Orthodox, to see if any arrangement could be made on the subject of exchanges.—Mr. J. H. Lyman made some remarks on the subject, and concluded by saying, that he should have no objection, that Unitarian ministers, who happened to be here, and who had not rendered themselves obnoxious by their actions or writings, should be occasionally invited to preach. He was explicitly told, that it would be no satisfaction to the Liberal party, to have an Unitarian minister occasionally *smuggled* into the pulpit. That it was the principle we were contending for, and not an idle ceremony, or a childish gratification.

Mr. Bates said, he was willing exchanges should be made, but he thought the subject ought to be left entirely with the minister, and he was willing to leave it with him. That he was satisfied the Liberal party would gain every thing they desired, if they were only quiet. That Mr. Tucker was a man of liberal feelings, and would naturally bring his people to coincide with him; but to bring the subject before the town, and make it the theme of public discussion, would be thrusting a fire-brand into a magazine of powder. That, though he was willing himself, that the course we desired should be pursued, and he believed many of the Church were of the same sentiment, yet some of them, he knew, would not listen to the proposition, for a moment, in the present state of their feelings, and he thought a majority of the

Church would not agree to it. That their prejudices on this subject might be overcome, and the opinion and reasoning of Mr. Tucker might have this effect; but if the subject were started now, they might pledge themselves in such a way as to make any change hopeless.

The other gentlemen present, expressed their willingness, that the course we desired should be pursued, and regretted that a different one had ever been adopted, but they all concurred in the opinion, that it was inexpedient that any thing should be done at this time.

We should probably have adopted the advice of our Orthodox friends, (which we could not doubt was sincerely given) and have rested satisfied, from what had been said and done, that our wishes would have been fulfilled; but, we recollected, that in two instances, in the old county of Hampshire, the friends of Liberal Christianity had been disappointed upon this subject. From the declarations and assurances of their ministers, while candidates for settlement, they thought they might expect, that they would make exchanges with Unitarians after settlement. In one instance, exchanges had actually been made, while the individual was a candidate, and the excuse for refusing to continue this practice afterwards was, that it would give offence to a portion of the church, who had conscientious scruples on the subject.

We thought it our duty therefore, to appeal to the town upon the subject. The following vote and preamble were prepared for this purpose:

"Whereas it is provided by the Constitution of this Commonwealth, that every denomination of Christians, demeaning themselves peaceably and as good subjects, shall be equally under the protection of the law; and that no subordination of any one sect to another shall be established by law, the object of which provision is, to secure an equality of rights,

so far as may be to every citizen of this Commonwealth: And whereas, it is well known, that there are many members of this society, whose religious sentiments differ from those of their present pastor, but who are desirous to preserve "the spirit of unity in the bond of peace," and are willing to concur in the settlement of a colleague, whose religious sentiments are different from their own, if it can be done consistently with the duty they owe themselves as Christian freemen: And, whereas, for several years past, respectable, devout, and regularly ordained congregational ministers, who differ in sentiment from our pastor, have not been invited to preach in our pulpit, which has been a subject of deep regret to many individuals of this society:

Now, therefore, for the purpose of satisfying the members aforesaid, that we recognize them as Christian brethren—that we do not consider them as differing so essentially from us in their views of the doctrines of christianity as to render it improper for us to continue to join in the performance of those acts of religious worship, which are enjoined upon us by our holy religion—to shew them that we respect the rights of a minority, while we claim to exercise the power of a majority—to preserve the unity of this society, (which has continued without interruption, from the first settlement of the country,) by preventing any divisions from springing up among us:—

Voted, That it is the wish of this society, that the colleague who may be settled with us, in pursuance of the vote passed in November last, do not refuse to *exchange* with, or to suffer to preach in the desk, any pious, moral, congregational minister, on account of any difference from him in religious sentiment."

After the town meeting was opened, a motion was made to give Mr. Tucker a call, by Mr. D. S. Whitney. Mr. Howe stated to the town, that he had in-

tended to submit a proposition for their consideration, and that the decision of the town on that proposition, would govern his conduct on the present occasion. That it was probably well known to all of them, that he was an Unitarian. That he was a sincere believer in the Gospel, and strongly desirous to support the ordinances of religion, and to uphold the christian ministry. That, as a majority of this town differed from him in religious opinions, he was willing to acquiesce in the choice of a minister whose sentiments coincided with theirs. That he had no objection to the present candidate, and would give him his support, upon condition that the class of Christians to which he belonged, were recognized as such. That the ministers, who thought as he did, had for several years been excluded from the desk; and, that unless they could be admitted, and all distinctions between them and other clergymen could be abolished, he should be compelled, however reluctantly, to vote against giving a call to any body. That having found this practice established when he came to this town, and considering the advanced age of Mr. Williams, he had not thought it a duty to make any difficulty upon the subject, though it had given him much pain; but, that now, as we were about to settle a young man, and he was called upon to act, he could no longer forbear to come forward, and claim perfect Christian Liberty and free Toleration.

As the motion of Mr. Whitney had been seconded, the vote offered by Mr. Howe could not be considered, until that was disposed of, unless the mover would consent to withdraw it. Mr. Howe requested him to do this, and when he hesitated about complying, Mr. Howe stated to him that he should withhold his support, and so would his friends, from Mr. Whitney's vote, until the minds of the people were known, in relation to the subject embraced in Mr. Howe's vote. Mr. Whitney withdrew his motion,

and the vote inserted above was then taken into consideration. It was supported by all those who advocated it, on general principles. No distinction was made between *invitations* and *exchanges*. The grievance most dwelt upon was, probably, the neglect to invite those Unitarian clergymen to preach, who happened to be here. Yet this was merely intended to illustrate the principle, by which those were governed, who had thus conducted. *Exchanges* however were spoken of, particularly by Mr. Hinckley. He stated the course that Dr. Forbes used to pursue, in making *exchanges* with the venerable Dr. Fisk, of South Brookfield, who was called an Arminian (as he said) in those days, but would probably be considered an Unitarian now. That his father, though a rigid Calvinist, was gratified at the course pursued by Dr. Forbes, and Mr. Hinckley said he wished to see as liberal and Christian a spirit prevail here.

The proposition was met by the town, in a manner altogether different from what we had been led to expect. No opposition was made to the principle of the vote. Some part of the preamble was objected to, and a modification of the vote proposed, but no sacrifice of its object was asked for. The first clause in the preamble was objected to, merely because it contained a political truism, which could not be controverted. The third was objected to, because it was said, it implied a censure upon the present pastor, and as this was not intended, it was withdrawn as soon as the suggestion was made. The last section was objected to, rather upon the ground of its being superfluous, than because it contained any thing exceptionable. It was urged that the *vote* was all that was of importance, and it was stated that all that was wished from the preamble was, to have the motives of those who submitted the vote understood. Their views were now apprehended by all present, and the preamble would lose its impor-

tance if the vote itself were passed. It was only necessary to retain so much of it as would render the vote intelligible to those who should hereafter examine it. The phraseology of the vote itself was modified, to put the subject upon the most catholic and liberal footing. This was not asked for at first, because it was supposed that nobody but those of the Congregational order, were interested in the question.

The practice of the Church, in inviting all classes of Christian professors, without instituting any scrutiny into their speculative opinions, was adverted to in the debate, and a wish was expressed, that the same liberal principle, which prevailed at the communion table, might rise to the desk.

Mr. Hinckley particularly, adverted to the influence of the Orthodox clergy in this vicinity, and explicitly stated that it was his object to guard against it. For that object exclusively, he proposed a vote, which was afterwards withdrawn by him.

During the whole discussion, it was taken for granted, or seemed to be, that Mr. Tucker could have no objection to exchanging, if the town were willing, and, it was upon this ground, that the expression was changed from the *wishes* of the town, to a mere expression of their *willingness*.

It was suggested by Mr. Bates, that the phraseology, "it is the wish of the society that the colleague do not refuse," would make it the duty of the colleague to exchange with every body who might propose an exchange, however strong his objections might be to his personal character. That the right of private judgment would be taken away; and, though it was stated, that the vote only expressed a wish that he should not refuse to exchange *on account of any difference of sentiment*, leaving him the right to refuse for any other reason, yet, as it was insisted, that the vote was susceptible of that construction; and, it was said there were many Ortho-

dox clergymen, with whom they should not wish the colleague to exchange, the alteration of the vote was assented to by those who proposed it.

When Mr. Howe expressed a preference to retaining the word *wish*, because it would be a little more likely to influence Mr. Tucker, Mr. D. S. Whitney said, "after the conversations, Mr. Howe, you have had with Mr. Tucker on this subject, I should not suppose you could want any further assurance of the course he would pursue." Mr. Howe told him, on the whole, that it would look like distrusting Mr. Tucker, and he would not oppose the exchange.

After this full and free discussion of the question of *exchanges*, which we thought involved the great question of Christian Liberty and free Toleration, the following vote was unanimously adopted:

"WHEREAS, it is well known, that there are many members of this Society, whose religious sentiments differ from those of their present pastor, but who are desirous to preserve "the spirit of unity in the bond of peace," and are willing to concur in the settlement of a Colleague, whose religious sentiments are different from their own:

Therefore, voted unanimously, that this society are willing that the Colleague, who may be settled with us in pursuance of the vote passed in November last, should EXCHANGE *with*, or *invite* to preach, in the desk, any pious Clergyman, of any denomination of Christians."

The meeting was then adjourned for dinner. At dinner Mr. Tucker was informed of the proceedings of the town, and was informed (as he said) that he would probably be enquired of in the course of the afternoon, as to his conscientious scruples on the subject of *exchanges*. In the afternoon, a committee was appointed to wait on Mr. Tucker, in consequence of a vote which had been passed to give him a call.—Mr. Hinckley was chairman of this committee, and

upon meeting Mr. Tucker, he read to him the foregoing vote, and he was asked, whether he had any conscientious scruples about carrying this vote into effect. He said he had none at all: That he cordially approved of the vote, and was glad it had been adopted. The vote giving him a call was then read to him, and the conversation changed to that subject.

A few weeks after the installation of Mr. Tucker, Mr. Peabody, of Springfield, wrote him a letter, saying he should be happy to make an exchange whenever it might be agreeable to Mr. Tucker.* To this Mr. Tucker replied, stating that he had not been much in the habit of making exchanges in the place he came from—that he was reluctant to preach before strangers—that he had no horse and chaise—and had not become acquainted with his people: But not reciprocating the civility proffered, by say-

*This letter of Mr. Peabody has been much misunderstood. It has been supposed by many to have contained a proposal for an immediate exchange, and Mr. Peabody has been much censured for his precipitancy. The letter, which was shewn by Mr. Tucker to Mr. Hinckley and Mr. Howe, a short time after it was written, contains no such proposition. It merely proposes an exchange "*whenever*" it may be agreeable to Mr. Tucker. We had intended to insert both the letter and answer in this statement, and for this purpose the following letter was addressed to Mr. Tucker:

Northampton, August 9, 1824.

REVEREND SIR—It is in contemplation to lay before the public a statement of the facts and circumstances relative to your call and installation here, together with the correspondence which has passed between yourself and others. As it is intended that this publication shall be scrupulously accurate and faithful to the truth in every particular, we shall esteem it a favor if you will furnish us with a copy of the letter from Mr. Peabody to you, together with your answer.

We are respectfully, yours, &c.

SAMUEL HINCKLEY,
JOSEPH LYMAN.

Rev. Mark Tucker.

To this the following answer was returned:

Northampton, August 10, 1824.

GENTLEMEN—I received yours of yesterday. I cannot with my views of propriety be instrumental in giving to the public the letters, a copy of which you ask me to furnish you for that purpose.

Yours respectfully, MARK TUCKER.

Hon. Messrs. Hinckley & Lyman.

ing, that at any future time it would be agreeable to him to make an exchange.

This was considered by Mr. Peabody a refusal to exchange, and was doubtless so intended by Mr. Tucker; for knowing how it was understood, he has never undertaken to correct the mistake, if any was made in relation to the import of his letter.

After two or three interviews with Mr. Tucker, without obtaining any satisfaction as to his views or designs, the following letter was sent to Mr. Samuel Clarke.*

MR. TUCKER TO MR. CLARKE.

Northampton, May 8, 1824.

Dear Sir,

As you requested me to note down for you some remarks I made respecting my views and feelings in regard to the vote of the town, I cheerfully comply with your request. It is a matter of extreme regret to me that any difficulty should have arisen in relation to it. My understanding of it is that it left me to act independently of any party. If it had been different, or expressed an *unwillingness* that I should have exchanged with, or invited into the pulpit, ministers differing from me in religious sentiment, I should *not* have approved of it, because it might have been construed into an act of illiberality, and a pledge to the strict party. For the same reason I could not have approved of a vote of any town, which constructively laid me under a *pledge* to a liberal party. I always said that I would give no pledges, nor come under obligation to any party: Still I have no conscientious scruples about admitting into the pulpit any pious clergymen of any denomination of chris-

* ☞At the last interview with Mr. Tucker, Mr. Lyman proposed to him to request Mr. Bates, Mr. Strong and Mr. Whitney, to meet Mr. Hinckley, Mr. Howe and himself, at Mr. Tucker's house, to see how they understood the vote of the town, and to see if some arrangement could be made which should be satisfactory to all the parties. This proposition has never been any farther noticed by Mr. Tucker.

tians. I expect *now* to admit such into the desk. But I am not willing to *commit* myself—to be considered as pledged to any party: 1st. Because I did not so understand the vote of the town. 2d. Because I consider every minister should be left to act independently, though kindly and charitably. 3d. Because I am unwilling to be involved in controversy. I am a man of *peace*. The Orthodox, I have no doubt, are sincere and conscientious. I cannot give my countenance nor lend my influence to break down what they think right, though others think it illiberal; nor do I feel at liberty to say of the Unitarians as a body, that they are no Christians. I wish to seek peace and pursue it.

With great respect, yours in haste,

MARK TUCKER.

Mr. Samuel Clarke.

Soon after, the succeeding correspondence passed between Mr. Tucker and Mr. Joseph Lyman.

MR. TUCKER TO MR. LYMAN.

Honored and dear Sir,

I thank you for the perusal of the pamphlet you were so kind as to send me, and for the pains you were so good as to take in transcribing for me the vote of the town.

As to the pamphlet I think it breathes a kind spirit which I like; the points of doctrine in it are such as do not become me to remark upon. I am bound to respect the candor and conscience of every man.

As to the vote of the town, perhaps you were not aware that the Clerk forwarded it with the Call. It is a matter of extreme regret to me, that any discrepancy of opinion should exist in relation to it. As I remarked at the last interview at my house, with yourself and Judge Howe and Judge Hinckley, my understanding of it was that it left me to act a course independent of any party. If it had been different,

or expressed an *unwillingness* that I should have exchanged with or invited into the pulpit ministers differing from me in religious sentiment, I should not have approved of it, because it might have been construed into an act of illiberality, and a pledge on my part, (though fully Orthodox myself in sentiment,) to the Strict party. For the same reason I could not have approved of a vote of any town, which constructively laid me under a pledge to a Liberal party—especially after what I had previously said in conversation with my liberal friends before the town meeting, that I would give *no pledge*—that I would be under *no obligation* to exchange with a Trinitarian or Unitarian; at the same time I expected to act on kind and catholic principles. I remarked at the above named interview, what I observed to Judge Howe before the committee of the town in answer to a question of his, that I had no conscientious scruples about admitting into the pulpit any pious clergyman of any denomination of Christians. Nor have I now. I expected *then*—I now expect to admit into the pulpit pious clergymen who differ from me in sentiment. But I am not willing to *commit* myself —to be considered as pledged to any party—because 1st. I did not so understand the vote of the town. 2dly. Because I consider every minister should be left to act independently, though I believe he should ever feel and act kindly. 3dly. Because it was remarked at the above named interview, that yourself and friends felt themselves called upon to break down the intolerance and illiberality of associations of ministers formed in this commonwealth, as you supposed, against Unitarians.

I am a man of *peace*. I wish to take no ground against any man. I wish to avoid the controversy that embitters so many against each other in this state. I have no liberty to decide what body of men are no Christians, especially so long as I am ignorant of their belief and religious character. I hope *you*

will not feel yourself called upon to oppose those who differ from you in other parts of the state—if they oppose you, I trust you will not them.

I still wish to cherish the highest personal regard for yourself and friends of your sentiment. I shall not forget your attentions and kindness. I leave at the foot of the cross all unpleasant feeling. Do not let us separate when we are not called to sacrifice any principle.

With sentiments of respect, I am, dear sir,

Yours affectionately,

MARK TUCKER.

Hon. Joseph Lyman.

MR. LYMAN TO MR. TUCKER.

May 11, 1824.

Rev. and dear Sir,

I received your kind communication, explaining your views of the vote of the town, for which I thank you, and I equally regret with you that there should have ever been any misunderstanding respecting it. I never supposed there could be, for on the day of the town meeting, and for several days after, all sects were applauding themselves for having given an example of an enlarged and liberal policy worthy of imitation by others and of themselves as Christians.

In one point, and which I consider the main point in the case, we are perfectly agreed, that is that it was the intention of the vote that you should pursue "a course independent of any party," that you should regard alike all denominations of Christians, as it respected your intercourse with the pious teachers of those denominations.

I was perfectly satisfied with this course in consequence of the noble spirit of catholicism which you displayed in your various conversations with me; and I did consider you on that account, the greatest

blessing heaven could send us. I am too an advocate for peace, and I wish to avoid controversy as much as any man, and for that very reason I was highly pleased with the vote of the town, because I believed the tendency of it was to put down all "envyings, wrath, strife and evil speaking" among men.—In my converse with you I hope that I shall always be respectful and free from all bitterness, and I am happy that it has now assumed an epistolary shape, which will be exempt from that earnestness and zeal in conversation, which is often miscalled temper and a bad disposition of the heart. "It is my intention to follow peace with all men," and whatever differences arise, I hope that we shall be governed by the precept of the great Apostle of the Gentiles—"in malice be ye as children, but in understanding men."

In order therefore to fully understand if there is any essential difference of opinion between us upon this great principle of catholicism, which has been manifested by the people of your charge, I will thank you to reply to the following queries:

1. Whether you consider the vote of the town as extending to exchanges as well as invitations?

2. Whether you intend to invite any Unitarian clergyman to preach for you on the sabbath at any future time?

3. Whether you consider that there is any difference in principle between invitations and exchanges?—if so, be pleased to explain the difference.

That the God of all truth may scatter light, and not darkness, in our paths, and make us all in our several callings useful here, and in his own due time and way everlastingly happy, is the constant and earnest prayer of your friend

JOSEPH LYMAN.

Rev. Mark Tucker.

MR. TUCKER TO MR. LYMAN.

Northampton, May 17, 1824.

Honored and dear Sir,

Ill health and interruptions have prevented my giving the subject of your very friendly communication that reflection I could wish in order to return a satisfactory answer. I think the least discussion will promote the most peace.

I was not aware that the vote of the town placed me under any *obligation* to invite or exchange with any minister. It was expressly said before the committee of the town (and all the members appeared to concur in it) "this was left with me," as it must be left with every other minister.

I had no idea you would consider invitations and exchanges as so synonymous as to suppose that because I should be willing to invite, therefore I must for the same reason exchange. During my visit here, I spoke without hesitancy of invitations, because I understood that until some few years previous it had been the custom here, and I was expressly told that it would be satisfactory if things should return to their former state; but I did not so speak of exchanges. On that subject I always said I could give no answer. I did not know the state of things in Massachusetts, and therefore could not say what ground it would be proper for me to take. This remark I more than once repeated.

I had no idea the question of exchanges would become a subject of feeling and contention here; nor had I the most distant thought that I should be considered by *any* as pledged on this point. My disappointment on this subject is extreme. How soon has our fair morning been overcast with clouds! But do not let us contend. Your own delicacy and condescension, when alluding to this whole subject during my first visit, won me very much. I should be

sorry if any thing should occur to affect that frankness and affection I have always been accustomed to manifest towards all men.

Yours, with much consideration,

MARK TUCKER.

ANSWER TO THE LAST—DATED

Northampton, May 25, 1824.

Rev. and dear Sir,

I received yours of the 17th inst. two days after its date, and regret exceedingly "that any thing should occur to affect that frankness and affection" which you say, you "have been accustomed to manifest towards all men." This event has already occurred, it appears to me, if you consider that communication as a reply to the queries, which I thought I was justified in putting to you on the 11th instant. Your belief, that "the least discussion will promote the most peace," may be a very comfortable doctrine for those, who consider themselves infallible, but not for those, who seek truth, and who consider their rights wholly disregarded.

You say that you were expressly told, "that it would be satisfactory if things should return to their former state." We say so now. What was the former state? It was this: All congregational ministers were treated alike, and you were expressly told, that the Rev. Mr. Williams had once agreed on an exchange with the Rev. Mr. Willard, and the day appointed for it to take place, but that he was prevented from this exercise of liberality, by clergymen, who call themselves *Orthodox*, in this vicinity, and who refused to grant him aid, in case he should assist Mr. Willard. It was this principle, or rather this practice, that was intended to be put down, by the people of your charge. It was so expressly stated by Judge Hinckley, in the discussion which took place in town meeting. Since that time, and within

a short period, Mr. Peabody has been settled at Springfield, and no offer to exchange was ever made by him to Mr. Williams, and good cause existed why no such offer could be made. Mr. Williams was fettered (perhaps *now* voluntarily so) by the association of ministers in this county.

This refusal to exchange is a custom not so old as you imagine. It is not universal now by any means. You had many bright examples to follow. The Rev. Dr. Emmons of Franklin, Dr. Sumner of Shrewsbury, the Rev. Dr. Parish of Byfield, the Rev. Dr. Holmes of Cambridge, Rev. Mr. Puffer of Berlin, Rev. Mr. Clark of Rutland, with many others, who are now living, and who embrace the calvinistic faith, "and last, though not least," Rev. Dr. Osgood of Medford, and Rev. Dr. Lathrop of West Springfield, who are now called to their final account. And think you that these eminent servants of the Most High are excluded from the realms of light, in consequence of their acknowledging Arminians, Arians and Unitarians as christian brethren?

The contest between us is not about speculative opinions. It is a contest between truth and error, upon a subject of practical importance. This was well known to you before your settlement with us. You now say, that upon the subject of exchanges, you always said (this I suppose alludes to the period before your settlement) you "could give no answer," that you "did not know the state of things in Massachusetts, and therefore could not say what ground it would be proper for you to take;" and you add that "this remark you more than once repeated." May I be permitted to ask, to whom you made this remark? No one, who advocated this principle, recollects any such remark. Indeed the difference between exchanges and invitations was never suggested to any one, who did advocate this principle, until since your refusal to exchange with Mr. Peabody, and indeed

even now I cannot induce any one to explain to me the difference in principle.

You "did not know the state of things in Massachusetts." One gentleman well recollects your having said that "you did not wish to know," that you "wished to remain ignorant," that you "could in that way better pursue an honest and independent course, unfettered by any associations of ministers."

To two other gentlemen you said, that your "ideas on the subject of exchanges were the same as Dr. Nott's, and that the only reason why Dr. Nott refused the call of the Park Street Church was, that the people of that parish would not permit him to *exchange* with the Unitarian ministers of Boston." Was not this "speaking of exchanges?"

To another gentleman, who never doubted that you would *exchange* with, as well as invite clergymen of his own sentiments into the desk, and who mentioned to you that there would be an unreasonable interference on the part of the clergymen of this vicinity, you said, that you apprehended no difficulty on that account—"that they could be *managed*"—that if you should receive a call, and should accept it, you should invite Dr. Nott to preach your installation sermon, and that he would put down every thing of that sort. After this no difficulty was ever apprehended, or even suggested itself to my mind, except that which might arise on the part of my fellow townsmen; and when I found that difficulty done away by a unanimous vote of the town, the "fair morning" commenced. It was the happiest hour of my life. The spirit of exclusion and intolerance, which had been so much fostered among us for fifteen years past, I was sure would find but little nourishment within the sphere of your influence, and that the time had already arrived, when the best passport to the affections and fellowship of our christian brethren, would no longer be a subscription to their creeds,

and the utterance of their shibboleth, but a life of christian virtue and practical godliness,—or in other words—a religious practice founded on its proper basis, charity, toleration, and personal goodness.

But to return to the questions which I proposed to you. They were so plain and simple, that I could not imagine a week's reflection could be necessary to enable you to answer them; and that you, who have been so frank and candid, should so entirely have omitted to notice them. They were not proposed from motives of idle curiosity, but to enable me the better to understand some expressions in your letter, and to know the ground on which we stood, and what we might hereafter expect. You deceive yourself if you suppose a submission to the course of conduct, which you now seem disposed to pursue, does not require of us "the sacrifice of any principle." It is not a question of rites and ceremonies, that we are contending about, but one of principle—a principle that involves the dearest rights of christian freemen.

To the first inquiry made by me, to wit, whether you consider the vote of the town as extending to exchanges as well as invitations, you merely reply by stating how far you consider the vote binding on you, or rather how far it did not bind you. You had already expressed yourself very fully on this point. The question was not how far the vote binds you, but what it embraces as far as it does extend.

To my second inquiry you have not given a word of reply, nor is it even noticed by you. The inquiry is an interesting one to me, and I can see no reason why it should not receive a frank and ingenuous answer.

To the third inquiry, as to the difference between exchanges and invitations, you say you had no idea I considered them "so synonymous" as to suppose that because you should be willing to invite, there-

fore you must for the same reason exchange. I made the inquiry with a view to learn from you the *difference* in *principle* between them, and if it be so obvious as you seem to suppose, it could be no great trouble to you to point it out. As you had never made the slightest allusion to any difference in any conversation I had with you before your settlement, nor in any conversation with any of my friends, of which I have ever heard,—as they were both equally embraced in the vote of the town, and as I cannot now perceive the difference between inviting a man into the desk from Springfield or from Mr. Lyman's tavern, I hope you will not think it strange that I should consider the two things as standing on the same foundation.

You speak of the difference between exchanges and invitations as having long existed in your mind, and having been distinctly recognized by you before your settlement. If so, "it is strange, passing strange," that it should not have been mentioned by you at the time the vote, embracing both, was read to you by the committee. You expressed your entire and cordial approbation of the vote, and said as I understood you to admit, that you had no conscientious scruples about carrying it into effect. In your first letter you say that you told Judge Howe when the vote was read to you, that you had no conscientious scruples about admitting into the pulpit any pious clergyman of any denomination of christians. The question put to you was not about admitting or excluding, but whether you had any conscientious scruples about carrying it into effect. The vote says nothing about admissions, but speaks of exchanges and invitations, and this made me desirous to know whether you considered the vote as extending equally to both, or whether, in the language of your letter, it extended to *admissions* merely, which might embrace both or either. In one part of your letter, you couple ex-

changes and invitations together in their natural order as they are connected in the vote, and as they have ever existed in my mind. But where you speak of what you expect and are willing to do, or have no conscientious scruples about, you drop these words and substitute *admissions* into the pulpit and invitations to preach. I hope there is no design in this, yet I must confess that I am a little at a loss after all that has passed, whether you intend to say, you have no conscientious scruples about *exchanging* with a clergyman who is known to be a Unitarian.

Are you certain that you now know the state of things in Massachusetts? All the information you can have received upon the subject since your first visit to us has probably been derived from a partial source. The time has happily arrived, when the Orthodox (falsely so called in my opinion) have ceased to be formidable; when names have lost their terror, and a man may confess without fear, through what channels he receives knowledge and truth.

I will now close this letter with the following sentiments uttered by christians as holy, as pious, and as learned as any of your orthodox brethren: "We cannot preserve the unity of belief: we may, however, keep "the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace." Amid these differences, we may preserve our fellow-feelings bright and pure; we may learn to respect that faith, however mistaken, which bringeth forth good works; we may realize, if we please, that state of feeling, which might lead us in another world to look back on these differences with regret, and think of them as the shadows of a summer cloud, which for a short time has darkened our sun, but will then have passed rapidly away."

—"Wherever there is charity and good feeling between ministers and the members of different religious societies, together with a regard to the ordinances and obedience to the laws of religion, *there*

is manifested the spirit of Christ and the power of the gospel; but wherever there is arrogance and spiritual pride, wherever religion is made a matter of form, wherever the different sects regard each other with aversion or contempt, and wherever the clergymen of one denomination fold their garments about them, and stand aloof in surprising dignity and infallibility from the clergymen of another, *there* is a spirit which christianity condemns—whether it be at Boston, New York, Philadelphia or Baltimore; and we would say it with equal boldness to a Unitarian minister, a Methodist lay-preacher, a Presbyterian clergyman, a Catholic priest or a mitred bishop."

Yours respectfully,

JOSEPH LYMAN.

Rev. Mark Tucker.

The correspondence was begun by Mr. Tucker, and the last letter of Mr. Lyman remains unanswered. The reasons for this silence are best known to Mr. Tucker.

From these facts, and circumstances which occurred previous to Mr. Tucker's ordination, what course had the Liberal party a right to expect Mr. Tucker would pursue? What they did expect we know for a certainty, whether rightly or not, remains to be shewn. They did expect, that *Unitarian* ministers would not only be invited to preach occasionally in the pulpit, but that *exchanges* would be made with them. They did expect, that neither of these acts of christian courtesy would be refused or denied. They took the most unwearied pains to convince Mr. Tucker, that nothing short of this, would be deemed by them an equivalent for the great sacrifice they should make, in contributing to the settlement and support of a man whose sentiments were so widely different from their own.

In all the conversations between him and the Unitarians, he never *intimated* that any difficulty about this intercourse could originate with him. He never referred to any other circumstance, which could possibly deter, or even delay, him from pursuing the course they wished, except what might result from the opposition of a considerable number of his society.

They were led to be more explicit upon this subject with Mr. Tucker, from considering the region of country from which he came. They knew that Unitarianism had been treated with a degree of harshness and severity, by some of the leading divines in New York, not only incompatible with the exercise of christian charity, but altogether unrivalled by any class of people claiming to be christians, in New England.

When he was so often told, the Unitarians could never concur in giving him a call, unless the pulpit could be opened equally to all, and *invitations* and *exchanges* placed upon the same liberal ground assumed by the church here in relation to the subject of communion, it is extremely to be regretted, that he should never have *intimated* that any difficulty could arise with him on the subject, either from conscientious scruples, or from a desire to uphold the opinions or practices of any sect or party.

If any distinction existed between *invitations* and *exchanges*, it is extremely to be regretted, that it should never have been adverted to by Mr. Tucker, in any conversation of his, or that it should not have been alluded to, in the public discussions upon the subject. No such intimation or allusion was ever made, and both subjects are equally comprised in the vote of the town.

It is said, that the vote of the town did not bind Mr. Tucker; it left him free to act as he please. Nobody ever pretended that the vote itself, bound him—neither did the vote giving him a call bind him

to accept it. He was at liberty to reject the proposal made to him altogether, or to object to any qualification of it, which the vote contained. But he did neither—he expressed his cordial approbation of the vote—said *he had no conscientious scruples about carrying it into effect*, and accepted the call upon the condition that he could be dismissed from his society in Stillwater. After this acceptance, we think he was *pledged* to those who gave him the call, and that he was bound to govern himself by the spirit which they had manifested.

It is said Mr. Tucker refused to *pledge* himself before his settlement *to make exchanges with any one.* If the word *pledge* is used in its strict literal meaning, it will not be pretended that any was given.—But the word is used in a figurative sense, and its meaning depends much upon the subject to which it is applied. A pledge to pay money, is one thing, and is to be proved in one way, while a pledge of affection, and the proof of it, is another. It would hardly be thought prudent, to depend on the mere word or assurance of an individual as a pledge for the conveyance of a valuable estate, while, as a pledge for one's feelings, or opinions, it would be thought highly unreasonable to ask any thing more. If Mr. Tucker means to say, that his acts and declarations did not amount to an *assurance* (and a solemn assurance too,) that the expectations of the Liberal party should be realised, we think he is not warranted in the position, by the facts in the case. We do not now perceive what more could have been done by us to secure the object we had in view. The vote speaks of *exchanges* and *invitations*—the preamble shews the object of it to be, equality of rights—the designs of the supporters had been fully explained to Mr. Tucker; if he put a construction upon the vote different from theirs, the plainest principles of common honesty required, that he should have stat-

ed that difference at the time. Mr. Tucker knew how persons, who proposed the vote, understood it, and he is bound by that construction, however different his own might have been.

After this review of the facts attending this transaction, we think we may with confidence insist, that Mr. Tucker did give a *pledge* that he would pursue a liberal and catholic course. That he would not undertake to exclude from the pulpit any pious christian minister, on account of any difference in religious opinion, even though the *strict party* might think his conduct improper.

We think that it can be shewn from Mr. Tucker's declarations, that he considers his approval of the vote as a *pledge* of his intentions to conform to the spirit of it. In his letter to Mr. Clarke he says, "if the vote had been different, or had expressed an unwillingness that I should exchange with Unitarian ministers, I could not have approved of it." Why not? "Because," says he, "such approval might be construed into a *pledge* to the Strict party." A *pledge* to do what? Why, to carry the vote (which in the case supposed they had procured to be passed) into effect. Approving a vote then, under such circumstances, does constitute a *pledge*, by the party approving, to carry the spirit of the vote into effect. Mr. Tucker has never pretended that he did not express his entire and cordial approbation of the present vote of the town when it was read, and the inference is irresistible, that he did thereby *pledge* himself to the *Liberal party* by whom it was introduced, that his conduct should conform to the spirit of that vote.

Mr. Tucker probably gave no other *pledge*, nor was any asked, as to his views of religion, or as to the doctrines he should preach here. Suppose that in one month after his settlement, he had come out with an avowal of his sentiments as an Universalist,

and had stated that these had always been his sentiments. Suppose some orthodox member of his society had called on him for an explanation of his conduct. Might he not have said, "Sir, I never gave any *pledge* that I was not an Universalist, or that I would not preach those sentiments when I was settled. No *pledge* was ever asked of me on the subject, and I did not intend to *pledge* myself to any party. To be sure, the sentiments I preached before my settlement were somewhat different from those I now preach; yet, in many points, there is a strong resemblance between Calvinism and Universalism. I was told that the principal danger apprehended here, was from Unitarianism, and if I did not preach that, it would be satisfactory, and at any rate I believe the Universalists are "*sincere and conscientious, and I cannot give my countenance or lend my influence to break down what they think right*, though you think differently." Would not the reply be, "Sir, you knew you were sent for to preach to a Calvinistic society—you knew, if you were not directly told so, that we could give a call to none but a Calvinist—you never avowed any sentiments inconsistent with those which you knew we should approve. You knew we gave you your call as a Calvinistic minister, and your acceptance of it was a *pledge* of your sentiments, and of the doctrines you intended to preach, as solemn and binding as the nature of the case would admit. If more was said about Unitarianism, than Universalism, it was because we apprehended more danger from that quarter—were more likely to suffer by them, than by Universalists, but we considered your acceptance of the call given you by the town as a *pledge*, that you intended to preach the doctrines you knew they were willing to hear." Conclusive and satisfactory as this answer must be to every ingenuous mind, we cannot perceive that it stands on better ground in any part

than the answer we have made to Mr. Tucker; or that he was any more *pledged* to preach the doctrines of Calvinism, or that the orthodox would have any more reason to complain of him now for supporting the doctrines of Universalism, than we have to complain of him for his treatment of us on the subject of exchanges.

Suppose Mr. Tucker had never said one word on the subject of invitations or exchanges before his settlement. If the town are willing he should exchange, and he has no objections himself, what should prevent the desires of a respectable part of his society from being gratified? It has been objected by some, who are opposed to exchanges and invitations, that they are acts of fellowship, and that those who believe in the doctrine of special conversion cannot exercise any act of fellowship, except towards those who have been specially converted. But this ground, whether true or false, cannot be maintained here. There is no act, which is more strikingly an act of fellowship, than joining in the celebration of the Lord's supper. There is a standing vote of the Church here, that all christian professors shall be invited to join in the Communion, though it was known, when the vote was passed, that it would extend to, and it was intended it should be accepted by, professed Unitarians. It is also well known that there are members of this Church who are Unitarians. After having accepted a call over a church thus situated, it would hardly do to pretend to any objection on the score of fellowship.

It has sometimes been objected, that it was a dereliction of duty in a minister, to expose his people to hear any opinions preached, which he does not himself approve. That to suffer Unitarians to preach in the desk, is to afford them an opportunity to corrupt the minds of their hearers, by preaching opinions inconsistent with Orthodoxy. But the little

semblance of plausibility this argument ever possessed, is lost by consenting to *invite* ministers of all persuasions; and Mr. Tucker has in this case abandoned it, by saying, he is willing and expects to invite Unitarian ministers to preach for him. He is willing then that his people should *hear* ministers, with whom his principles will not suffer him to *exchange*. It certainly can make no difference in the effect upon the people here, whether Mr. Peabody is invited to preach before he leaves Springfield, or after his arrival in this town. It probably would have no effect upon the doctrines he should preach, and if the people of his charge are cut off from the knowledge of the truth—if the gospel, in its purity, is never sounded in their ears by their present minister, there could hardly be a greater act of christian charity, than to afford them an opportunity to hear the whole truth. Why go to India to make converts, when they may be made so much nearer home? A soul in Springfield is surely as precious as a soul in Thibet, to say nothing of their being "our kinsmen according to the flesh." A preacher, coming to them in this way, would not meet that opposition which might be excited, if he was forced upon them.

We think many positive advantages would result from extending the practice of exchanges in this neighborhood. It would be a strong excitement to improvement among ministers, an excitement they are thought by some to need. It would tend to increase brotherly love among ministers; and, among the people, would overcome those prejudices which we are so prone to feel, towards those who differ from us in opinion.

A union of belief among christians is not to be expected, till the character of the human race is changed. Upon a subject so vast and complicated as the christian religion—which the mind cannot embrace at one view, and which presents so different

an aspect to the same individual, when viewed in different parts and under various circumstances—it can never be, that mankind should be brought to think exactly alike. But an *uniformity* of *spirit may* be obtained; and, we flattered ourselves that the measure we had adopted, was an important step towards the diffusion of that "brotherly love," which is the "fulfilling of the law."

It may be thought by some, that the subject is of small importance, and so it would be, were it not for the *principle* it embraces. It must be a very small thing to Mr. Tucker, who now says he has no conscientious scruples upon the subject, to make occasional exchanges with Mr. Willard, Mr. Huntington, Mr. Peabody, and Mr. Bailey; but to the *Liberal party* it is a matter of great importance.—This is the only way in which intolerance and illiberality can be effectually extinguished.

Those who concurred in the vote of the town, or who approve its spirit, agree in sentiment on this subject, that the peace and welfare of society require that this intolerance and illiberality should be ended. They have witnessed, with deep regret, the divisions and dissensions which have prevailed in the community, and they think that the only way to end them is by conforming to the spirit of the Gospel and the times, by putting all denominations of christians upon an equal footing.

To the Unitarians, it is a matter of still greater importance. The Calvinistic congregationalists have refused to invite Unitarian ministers to preach for them, because they have undertaken to say they were not Christians. By the constitution of our churches they are all placed on an equal footing, and are all entitled to be treated with courtesy and respect.

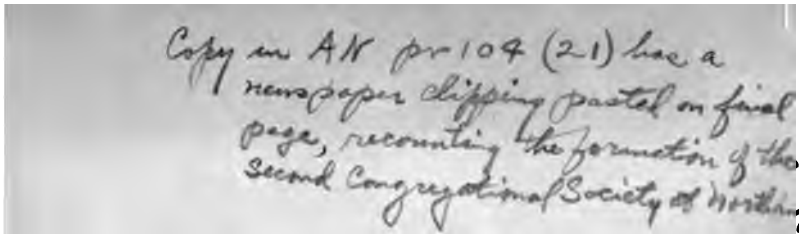
The right of one church to withhold fellowship from another church, at its own option by a sove-

reign vote, and thus perhaps without a just cause to wound its sensibilities and stigmatize its reputation, has been in the most explicit manner denied by a committee of the General Association of Massachusetts, in a public document of no little notoriety.—The baneful influence such a principle would have, and the ecclesiastical despotism it would introduce, are both noticed by the committee.

If this would be a dangerous principle in the hands of a *church*, we think it would not be less dangerous in the hands of the *clergy*. If the refusal of a *church* to have fellowship with another church, is calculated to "stigmatize its reputation," the refusal of a clergyman to do this cannot have a different effect.—And why is the reputation of Mr. Peabody to be *stigmatized* by this refusal? Simply, because he is an Unitarian; and, if those who are Unitarians were to sit down quietly under this reproach, and were to continue to support and uphold those by whom they were thus treated, would it not be in a measure agreeing, that the censure was deserved. The name of CHRISTIAN is dear to us, in common with all the followers of our blessed Lord. That we should be patient under any attempt to rob us of it, we think could hardly be expected. To be ranked with "Jews, Mahometans and Pagans," as we have been by Dr. Mason, or with "the Prince of Darkness," in the sweeping and emphatic language of Dr. Proudfit, would not, we presume, be very grateful to any of our opponents. Yet these epithets are only disagreeable because they *stigmatize with reproach* those on whom they are bestowed, and if refusing to exchange has, as the Orthodox say, the same effect, it must be equally contemned. If this reproach were bestowed on us individually, it might be borne with patience; but, when it is bestowed upon our friends, and the faith we profess, it would be treachery to our principles to submit to it; and, especially to support and uphold those by whom it is bestowed.

The vote of the church directing the pastor to invite to the communion table members of other churches, without distinction, manifested a noble, catholic spirit, and the vote of the town upon the subject of *invitations* and *exchanges*, so contrary to the predictions (not the wishes) of some of the Orthodox, evinced a regard to the rights and feelings of others, which will ever reflect the highest honor upon them. How they understood the proposition submitted to them, and what they intended by the vote they adopted, we cannot doubt for a moment. The question is not what the town wish or what the *Liberal party* desire. It is whether the pulpit shall be under the control of the society, or whether, against their wishes, it shall be closed at the pleasure of "the Strict party." We did think the wishes of this large and respectable society, in relation to a subject upon which Mr. Tucker had "no conscientious scruples," would be sufficient to influence his conduct; but in this we were mistaken. It is the rules prescribed by "the Strict party," which are to govern his conduct.

We have felt it due to ourselves, that our motives and our conduct should be fully explained. The total failure of our attempt, "to keep the spirit of unity in the bond of peace," is a bitter disappointment; but it becomes neither christians nor men, to cry "peace, peace, when there is no peace;" and, we hope we have expressed our disappointment in a spirit of christian candor, and without violating the "new commandment" of our blessed Lord, to "love one another."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Second Congregational Society of North